Sym. 8. 5.

CERTAINE GODLY AND VERIE comfortable Letters, full of christian consolation.

Written by M. Ed Dering vnto sondry of his friends.

And nowe published, for the proffite of the Church of God.

9-6 — 62

2. THES. 1. 15.

Stande fast, & keepe the instructions which ye haue bine taught, either by worde, or by our Epistles

NEWLY IMPRINTED.

M. Derings wordes ſpoken on his death-bed at Tokye. The 26. of June. 1576.

GOd forgeue me my negligence, that I haue not vſed the pretious giftes of God laid vp within me, more to his glory in my time: Yet I thanke God that I haue not vſed them in vaine glorie, or to pleaſe the vaine affections of men.

After my death my enimies will become my friendes, except ſome that knowe me not, and thoſe which haue no feelinge of the trueth: For I haue faithfully ſerued the Lorde and my Prince in a good conſcience.

A Preacher ſaying vnto him: It is for thee a great bleſſing that thou ſhal depart in peace, and goe from many troubles that our brethren ſhall beare and ſee. He anſwered: I ſhall goe from many troubles and leaue many behinde me. If the Lord hath appointed that his ſaintes ſhall ſuppe togither, why goe I not to them: but if there bee any doubting or ſtaggering, our Lord reueale the trueth.

Hearing one ſay, He hoped that in his ſilence, his minde was neuertheles exerciſed in godly meditation. He anſwered: As a poore frayle man, and the leaſt of all the elect ſaints, yet beleeuing and lookinge on Chriſt my ſaluation. We ſhall all meete togither with the ſweet harmony of the Lord of hoſtes. What a cloude of witneſſes is heere: yet a little while and we ſhall ſee our hope. We haue ouertaken the endes of the worlde which is come vpon vs, and we ſhall quicklie receyue the ende of our hope which we haue waited for. Afflictions, ſicknes and payne, are but the worlds portions from the Lord. It is not to begin for a moment, but to continewe in the feare of God all our dayes: for in the twinckling of an eye we ſhalbe taken away. Dallie not with the worde of God, make not light of it: Bleſſed are they that vſe their tongues well when they haue it.

35 301 E. D.

An Epiſtle of M. Ed. Deringe, before his 24 Lecture on the Hebrues, which he preached the 6. of December, 1572.

And gaue for a newe yeres gifte to the godlie in London & elſewhere.

(*.*)

To his verie louing friend Maiſter M. F.

THe outward afflictions and manyfold troubles of a great nomber of gods childrie, whoſe trauel & labour, frō day to day I had ſtil in experience, and the inward feelling of many woũded ſpirits, whoſe wofull ſighes and bitter mournings, I beheld in other, and had tried in my ſelfe: it made me very deſirous to ſeeke for remedies, to ſtoppe the complaints of ſo grieuous cryings, and to prepare our heartes in a ſtrong defence, that the fierie dartes of the Diuell might not wound vs. Vpon this occaſion when I had to expound that place of the Apoſtle full of notable comfort: That Chriſte in the dayes of his fleſhe, offered vp prayers and ſupplications to him that was able to ſaue him from death, with ſtrong cryings and teares, and was deliuered from the thinges hee feared. *I taried the longer in that matter, & declared more at large what boldnes and aſſurance of hope was offered heere vnto all that ſhould obey the worde. Which whē I had done, as God gaue me vtterance, the poore in ſpirit, to whom I applyed my ſelfe, one or two required mee to ſette it downe in writinge, that it might be profitable to manie, which was comfortable to them. I durſt not reiect ſuch a good requeſt, but though ſometime I deferred it, yet I neuer forgot it, till I had written all as I was requi-*

red. Which when I had done, I purposed then with my selfe, to make it yet more common, and set it abroad in print: knowing assuredly, where God would giue it increase it should bring forth the fruite of consolation, that we might stande vpright in the day of exill. Thus hauing performed both the request of others, & myne owne desire, and the time fallinge out with the beginning of a newe yeare, I thought it not amisse to offer my labour to you, who I knowe would well accept of it as a newe yeares gift, though of no great price, yet of great good will: and though easilie obteyned, yet not little to bee esteemed. Therefore my deare brother, whom I loue in Christ, and reuerence in the worlde as many wayes I haue cause, so I offer it vnto you: The Lorde for his mercies sake worke his owne good pleasure, that I may haue of you the fruite that I desire, and you the grace that ye stande in neede of: that as God hath greatly blessed you, and made you abound in many graces to the glorie of his name, the comforte of your friends, and the benefite of his people: so your ioye, that it might be made perfect, you might also abounde in this, to haue a strong faith against the daye of triall: which God of his mercie will surelie graunte vnto you, and finishe the good worke that hee hath begunne. Though I loue not to speake faire (for flatterie and deceytful prayses, I see what mischief they breed) yet I feare not to beare you witnes of your well doing: the spirit of God hath planted humilitie more deepe in your breast, then that pride and arrogancie can pull it out. And in deede the better you are, the more effectuall you doe see your owne vnworthinesse, that all your righteousnes is as a defiled clothe: and the more you ap-

approche vnto God, the more you abhorre your ſelfe, & knowe that in our fleſhe there dwelleth no goodneſſe. Abraham our father, Job, Eſaie, and many other men of excellent vertue in the ſight of God, they haue beene all aſtoniſhed, to ſee howe their righteouſnes hath bene ſcattered away as the cloudes of the heauens. Paule cryeth out: O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliuer me from this body of death! But becauſe wee haue an enimie, that ſpareth not to diſplaye all our corruptions before our eyes, to the ende he might make vs diſpaire, therefore we may be bold, to the ſtrengthning of our hope, to ſet before vs againe, the ſpirituall graces that worke within vs, to aſſure our ſelues that we bee borne of God. So our Sauiour Chriſt prayſed manie that beleeued on him, ſo did the Apoſtles, ſo may we: and our heauenly Father will ratifie and confirme our wordes, when we ſpeake the trueth, accordinge to the meaſure of faith that euery one hath receyued. So Saint Iohn biddeth vs all be bolde, and not bee deceyued: He that doeth the things that are righteous, him ſelfe is righteous, and like vnto Chriſt in whom hee is ſanctified. So may I ſay vnto you, the grace of GOD hath wrought happily in you in theſe yeres & conditiõ of life, that ſo vnfainedly you haue ſought the Lorde. It can not be of your ſelfe, who are not able ſo much as to thinke a good thought, but it is of him, whoſe ſeede abideth in you. And although, becauſe you haue that treaſure in a brittle veſſell, you ſee ſometime the fruite of olde Adam, and the prickes of his tranſgreſſion within your bowelles: yet feare not his malice that hath wrought this woe: You are bought with a dearer price, then that ſinne may raigne againe within you, &

he that hath purchaſed you, hee will not ſuffer his inheritance to be ſpoyled. It is neceſſarie you ſhould know your ſinne, or you could not vnderſtande howe great were your redemption. But your ſinnes can not ſeparate you away from him, who hath buried them in the earth, and will not ſee them any more. When you ſhall aſcende to come into his ſight, the earth will holde her owne, and keepe your ſinnes behinde you. The pearcing ſerpent ſhall not clime to accuſe you, nor the crooked ſerpent ſhall not hyde your redemption from you. Your care is caſt vpon him that careth for you, & you knowe him who hath ſpoken: All power is giuen vnto me in heauen and in earth. Ye knowe him who hath a name aboue all names, that in the name of Jeſus all knees ſhall bowe: Euen hee that bought you with a price, and you are not your owne. If it bee poſſible for you to periſhe, then is it poſſible againe that Chriſte ſhould ſuffer iniurie. This boldnes you haue through him who hath made manifeſt his grace vnto you, that you denying impietie & worldly concupiſcence ſhould liue ſoberly, purely, and godly in this preſent life, and looke for the bleſſed hope that ſhall be reuealed, when all ſecretes ſhall be opened. To which iſſue and happy ende of life, the Lord bring both you and yours, in the fellowſhip of his ſaints, to prayſe his holy name, when he ſhall make knowen vnto you his glorie, vnſpeakeable, and crowne it with immortalitie, Amen.

Farewell in Chriſt Ieſu, and pray for me. The 26. of December. 1572. Yours in the Lord to commaund, *Ed. Deringe.*

A letter of M. Ed. Deringe to his brother Maiſter R. D.

THe grace of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt be with you euer Amen. For Maiſter S. whether he be angrie or no I knowe not, if he be God is witneſſe betweene him and me howe litle I haue deſerued it, true it is, hee ſeemed not very wel pleaſed, but if God be pleaſed mans good-wil, either it ſhalbe recõciled, or ſhal not doe much hurt: if I haue the loſſe in worldlie thinges, I am content to beare it, and God will ſupply my want where I am able to doe nothing. I had leuer be your Brother not worth a grote, but hauing a good conſcience to praye for you, then haue (as I might) great liuing, & encomber my cõſcience with much ſinne. And good Brother Dering, here followe me, you ſhalbe a great deale richer then you are: ſtudie the ſcripture, reade bookes, bee able to reaſon in your faith, eſpeciallie and aboue all, haue a liuely feeling of God, that you thinke more vile of all the glorie of the world, then of the duſt of the earth: you knowe we muſt all periſhe, and you muſt walke the way of all fleſhe: Our good Parents both Father & Mother, they are gone before: you doe but waite the time, and you muſt goe after, your goods and landes muſt abide behinde, and the riches of your minde, they are onely your owne. You are my eldeſt brother, & you knowe not howe glad I would be, to ſee you goe before me in Religion: God hath giuen you, neither a light heade nor little vnderſtanding, if you would applie your ſelfe vnto knowledge, you ſhould then reape the fruit of your labour in more gladnes of heart then yet you can imagine: begin once but a little, and taſte how ſweet the Lord is, and you ſhall feele the riches of his glorie, and ſay: Happie be the time that euer I knowe

it. Let not good Brother, let not the worlde deceiue you, it is faithlesse and deceiptfull, when you shall loue it best, it will soonest deceyue you. And of me thinke thus: that in the world I can not doe you so great a pleasure, as continually to prouoke you to know God: and this I shalbe able to performe, though otherwise I shalbe able to pleasure you nothing, and therefore I beseeche you praye for me, and I will pray for you, & so the Lord God shall helpe vs both, that I may be faithfull which way I am called, and you may bee such as I desire, And for Maister S. or any other of such high calling, I loue them in the Lorde, euen as I loue myne owne soule, and will pray for them while they and I shall liue: Though I beare the losse of worldly things, yet by the grace of Christ, I will neuer lose a good conscience: and though they be angrie with me, yet I will not leaue to pray for them, and commit my cause vnto God, he will one day multiplie his graces, where hee hath so well begun, and they shall (I trust) be throughlie taught, whom God hath alreadie so farre instructed. For my L. of C. I haue bene once with him, but I meane not yet to goe the seconde time, God will worke his will, his name be praysed for euer. My L. of L. is a good man, I am often with him, I haue sene in him so good tokens of a good spirit, that I reuerence him in my heart & will serue him in Christ all wayes that I may. And for my dozing with any man, I praie you tell me wher you see me faultie, but if you know not of any sin, doe not diswade me from going vpright in the Gospell: But for my comfort, if you see me greeued, let me see in you, how you professe the gospell: & perswade your self of this, that a liuely zeale, & holy knowledg in you, and in my Sister, shal make me gladder then any bishoprike

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in England. The Lorde God for his mercies sake that hath called you out of the kingdome of darkenesse, and placed you in the fellowshippe of his saintes in light, make you to feele the depth of his graces, that you may be renewed, confirmed, strengthened, and made perfite vnto the ende, Amen. Fare you well in Christ Iesu, and doe my hartie commendations to my sister. From London, the xix. of Nouember.

Your louing brother *Ed. Deringe.*

To his brother Maister R. D.

THe grace of our Lord Iesu Christ bee with you euer, Amen. Good brother, I would gladlie write oftener vnto you, but otherwise I haue so much to doe, that some time I forget many duetie. Another cause is, I haue nothing to write as I would, so I haue no pleasure to doe that I would not. So it is, that I am forbidden to preach: which grieueth me most, then slanderous reportes doe hurt me much, where I would fainest please, so farre as I may in the feare of God. But how so euer things are, it is a blessed sentence whiche he hath spoken, who will surelie performe it: To them that loue God, all things happen to the best, and pray for me good Brother, that I may holde stedfast that loue, and wauer not in the faith of the gospell in which we haue assured life: and as I am bounde I trust I will pray for you, that your eyes may haue perfect & pure sight, to see the louing countenance of the Lorde which is better then life: so you shall bee happie euen in the dayes of your vanitie, and when nature shall make you yeelde to the necessitie of all flesh, to goe walke in the way of all the worlde, then shall you reape the fruite of your labour, and say with gladnes: Lord nowe lettest thou thy seruaunt depart in peace. *This is all the*

hope we haue, and the onely ioye that is to be looked for vnder the heauens: the nearer you shall feele it, the more you shall see it, it shall delight you and set you on a sure ground, that you shall not be ashamed for euer. The Lord God for his Christes sake strengthen vs all to so good a purpose, and the mutuall debte we owe one to another in the bound of nature, let vs paye it in this holy affection, to praye for our perseuerance vnto the ende. And as touching the issue of all my businesse, looke for the worst, hope for the best, and beare whatsoeuer shall fall. I trust to God once I shall see the day wherein I shall faithfully speake it, euen as Saint Paul Vita mea nō est chara mihi, vt cōsumā cursum meū cū gaudio The Bb. and many other seeke occasions against mee. God hath stil raysed me vp many friendes, but my hope is onely in him, that hath kept me hitherto, and not in man, when I knowe what ende will come, you shall heare: If I would lose the trueth I could winne the world, but that were a miserable change. God blesse vs and sende vs peace, make vs wise in his Gospell, and stedfast vnto the ende. My Wife hath bene I thanke God in no trouble, neyther was any toward her, that I knowe of, if any fall, God hath made her rich in grace and knowledge to giue accompt of her doing. D. W. on frydaie last as I was about to preach, forbad me in his Maiesties name, so I stande now forbidden, not by the Bb. but by our Princesse, whom I beseech God make a happie gouernour in his church, and many yeares to giue peace vnto his people. If we prayed as we should, God would make perfite the good worke hee hath begun, and make vs see the peace of Ierusalem all the dayes of our life. And I beseeche God, that wee may wishe so effectually his mercies, that at last hee may

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ſhutt vs vp in a bleſſed vnitie, that they whom he hath afflicted, may reioyce. Commende me to all. Thanke my coſen, for her letters, and for the parſonage ſhe writeth of: I will not refuſe it if I may haue it, neyther will I ſue for it though it were much better. If God call me to it, I pray God I may doe my duetie: if not, yet his will be done. I am perſwaded, if I be ſetled there, it ſhalbe a bleſſinge vnto the countrie: if not, without me God keepeth thoſe that bee his. Farewell good Brother, And the Lord keepe you and all yours, Amen. The 24. of December 1573.

Your louing Brother, Edwarde Dering.

To his Brother I. D.

THE God of all grace who giueth vs eyes to ſee, and eares to heare, giue vnto vs euer his holy ſpirit, that in the middeſt of a darke world, we may ſee the brightneſſe of his heauenly kingdome, and in this weake tabernacle of ſmall cõtinuance, we may knowe the dwelling place which we ſhall haue for euer in the reſurrection of the iuſt, Amen. I thanke you, good brother, for your letter, and for your care of my recouerie, but moſt of all becauſe you ſhewe a good teſtimonie of your minde, that the feare of God doeth dwell in you: of this I am gladde, and I am ſure I ſhalbe glad. For I knowe howe earneſtlie I deſire it, and I ſee howe vnfainedlie you are brought vnto it, and when the Lord in his good will, & his appointed time ſhal make vs ſee more cleare howe great this bleſſinge is, we knowe wee ſhall reape the fruite of it in the ſight of his preſence and in eternal life, this is enough for vs: a ſtrẽgth vnto our hope, a ſtay vnto our faith, a continuance vnto our loue, lett the

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good worke of God be finiſhed in vs. And of this wee may be ſure, whoſoeuer regardeth it not, or elſe embraceth the preſent worlde, he knoweth not God, nor yet hath euer ſeene the length & breadth of immortalitie: And therefore good brother, (becauſe bleſſed are the eyes which ſee that we ſee,) let vs ſtrenghten our ſight, with the ſweet oyntement of Gods ſpirite, that we may yet ſee more cleare, till through all the graces of GOD our Father, we may ſee our bodies alſo raiſed vp from the dead, and our ſelues ioyned vnto our Sauior Chriſt by decree and ſentence which neuer ſhalbe reuerſed, Come you bleſſed vnto eternall life: vnto this, a good conſcience will carie vs with ioye & gladnes. Beyonde this our ſenſes faile vs, and our hearte is able to comprehende nothing of the glorie which we ſhall ſee. Only I knowe it is exceeding great, whoſe greatneſſe I can neither ſee, nor heare, nor comprehende with thought: And therefore if euer thinge delighted vs, or if euer we haue ſeene pleaſure, or can wiſhe the thing in which we would reioyce, let vs turne all our affections hither with harte and ſoule, life and ſtrength, to delight in this, which alone is all, and no body ſhall take it from vs. And ſure brother, this is true, if God haue receyued vs to that bleſſed kingdome, he hath appointed the time in which he will giue vs his ſpirite (though not fullie) to comprehende it, yet ſo farre to ſee it, that wee will accounte all the worlde to be but dunge, to the ende we may winne Chriſt. And this I am perſwaded, good brother, God hath and will giue plentifullie vnto you, ſo that you ſhall vſe the worlde as though you vſed it not, and be here with men, as one whoſe dwelling were with the Angels of God, vſing your calling in any godly re-

recreatiō, but hauing your heart nearest vnto God, that gaue it: and the Lorde graunt you this happines, that all the pleasure of your life maye bee in deede acceptable, such as shall not after be mingled with shame & sorrowe. And I beseeche God blesse my good Uncle B. and make him now to know, which in his tender yeres he could not see: for the worlde was then darke, and we were blinde in it: but since we haue bene lightened with the gospell of the Lorde Iesus, and so much more earnestlie nowe we must pray that it may be vnto vs the gospell of healthe, and wee may increase in the knowledge of the mysterie of it. And the Lorde open his gracious countenance reuealed in it, vnto my Aunte, that shee may also make a blessed chaunge, to leaue vaine imaginations of her own minde, which are full of ignorance, and learne the scripture, which can make knowen vnto her the liuinge God. And commende me hartilie vnto them both, to whom I wishe as to my selfe.

Your louing Brother, Ed. Dering.

A comfortable Letter written by Maister Ed. Deringe, to a Christian Gentlewoman, *in heauines of spirite.*

IT is true (good Maistres H.) which the spirit hath spoken, and we feele it by experience, That by many tribulations we must enter into the kingdome of heauen. *This is a common decree which God hath sanctified to be a lot for all his children. So the authour and finisher of our faith, Iesus Christ him selfe was made perfect. Into his similitude we are also predesti-*

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nate that we ſhould firſt die with him, and then be partakers of his glorie: Lett vs not therefore refuſe that condition of life in which we haue the fellowſhipp of all the Saintes of God, but rather confeſſe with the holy Apoſtle, That bleſſed is the man who endureth temptation. But becauſe all afflictions are bitter for the preſent time, and when the minde is ſhaken with ſorrowe, it is then moſt eaſilie caſt downe of the enemie, let vs learne wiſelie what our troubles are, and be prepared of remedie in the day of triall. All our afflictions are eyther according to the fleſhe, in hunger, colde, nakedneſſe, ſhame, contempt, ſlaunder, &c. or according to the Spirite, in lamentations and mourninges, which the worlde knoweth not. The firſte euilles are eaſilie borne, for they are all but vanitie, and in vanitie they ſhall dye: if we ſee no fauour in the ſight of the Sunne that ſhineth not here acceptable vnto vs, when we haue payde the debt we owe vnto death, the Lorde will deliuer vs from all the iniuries of men. But in this behalfe let me cõfort my ſelfe, God hath ſet you free frõ ſuch afflictions. Your goodes are vnto you in a liberall portion, your life made happie with a louing huſhande, your calling acceptable vnder a gracious and good Miſtreſſe, in whoſe ſight you haue founde fauour, in this eſtate you feele no trouble, therefore I let it paſſe.

The other affliction which is of the ſpirite, and which can not be reſiſted with any earthlie bleſſing, looke for it aſſuredlie, for it will come vnto you, that you may ſuffer with Chriſt, and reigne with him in glorie.

Theſe troubles they come many wayes, euen as the ſpirite of God doeth leade vs vnto life. Firſt we are commanded to learne & knowe the worde of God, againſt

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this looke for many tentations, the enimie will trie whiche way to plucke that out of our heartes: Out of the worde we muſt learne a precious faith, and holde that vnmoueable before God: againſt this what temptations are betweene heauen and earth, you ſhal feele your portion, if any thing poſſible cã diſcourage you. With faith you muſt ioyne a liuelie hope, which is, a longinge apprehenſion of Gods glorie: in this alſo Sathan will pretermitte nothing to quenche your affections, that it may be dead, and to darken your minde that you may ſee nothing, without theſe you can not poſſiblie liue, and vnto theſe you can not poſſiblie come, but firſt you ſhall feele what is the ſtrength of ſinne. And yet notwithſtanding faint not, the Lion hath ouercome which is of the tribe of Iuda. The force of the Serpent ſhall bruſe our heele, but it ſhall not take away from vs the headpiece of ſaluation. Learne therefore firſt the worde of God, this is the ſeede of regeneration, by which wee are made newe creatures, this is the bread of ſpiritual nouriſhment, by which we are growne vp into eternall life. This is the weapon of our warfare, by whiche wee may wounde and driue away our enimies. This is the Scepter of our glorious kingdome, by which wee doe knowe that God doeth reigne in vs. Take this vnto you, the ſhielde of your defence, the ſtrength of your age, the wiſedome of your heart, and the ſafetie of your life, cõmended vnto you in the worde of Chriſt. Searche the Scriptures, and ſeale it in your heart with a good perſwaſion that it is the word of God and of life, and hee hath grauen in it an expreſſe image of eternall trueth. Let it dwell plentifullie within you, and your heart is armed with a moſt ſtrong defence, all enimies ſhall fall be-

before it, the wisedome of the wise shalbe brought to nought, and the councell of the prudent shalbe made foolish, the wayes of the aduersaries shalbe scattered, and the scorners seate shall bee throwen downe, so true it is that the Lorde hath spoken. Blessed is the man whose delight is in the Lawe of the Lorde, and whose meditation is in it day and night. Lett vs then bringe downe the hautinesse of our mindes, and receyue with meekenesse the worde grafted in vs, which can saue our soules. To this desire of vnderstanding, when God hath brought vs, then let vs pray to be deliuered from temptatio, and take heede we be not spoyled of so great a treasure. We haue three especiall enimies in this behalfe, of which S. Paule biddeth vs all beware: the one is, Phylosophie, that is, a vayne and curious searching of Gods mysteries, or measuring things reuealed according to our vnderstandinge, with which tentations whylest our Fathers were ouercome, they became foolishe in their owne imaginations, and chaunged the glorie of God into the likenesse of a corruptible man, making Images, praying to Angelles, imageninge of soules like little children, deuising Purgatorie, reasoning of Gods wisedome aboue our capacitie: As if we be predestinate we may liue as we list, if wee are commanded to worke, if our dayes are nombred, why seeke we any safetie to our life. If the Angelles doe keepe vs in all our wayes, that we shal not hurt our foote against a stone, why feare wee any falling? These phantasies, and worse then these, disquiet our mindes and fight within vs against our humble obedience to the Worde of God. Which all when we haue ouercome (and saide with the Prophete: secrete things are for the Lorde, but

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things reuealed for vs and our children) yet haue wee no peace. A ſeconde enimie riſeth vp greater then the firſt, which Saint Paule calleth The traditions of men, *for the heart of man which drinketh in errour, as the grounde doeth drinke water, is very obſtinatlie bounde with olde cuſtomes and longe continuance, meaſuring trueth which is pure and holy, only by time which is corrupt and euill, and not onely this, but nature alſo hath inflamed our affections to loue to much our fathers wayes, to like their opinions, to eſteeme their iudgementes, to prayſe their doeinges, to commende their age, to talke of their names, till throughe manie entiſements we are at laſt bewitched, our wiſedome is ſtolen away, and trueth is taken from vs: by this meanes all corruptions which haue ouerflowed the earth, haue ſtill wyde roomes in the heartes of manie. The Popes ſupremacie, Latin ſeruice, prayer for the dead, Maſſes, Diriges, Pardons, Pilgrimages, Senſinge, and all poperie, with the authours of it, Popes, Cardinalls, Monkes, Fryers, all which haue neither trueth, nor ſhadowe of trueth: not one worde of them is in all the Goſpell of Chriſt, onely olde cuſtome hath bredde it in our bones, and an opinion of our fathers hath printed it in our breſtes, and wee will not caſt it out. But the Lorde be thanked, who hath had mercie vpon vs, to make vs holde faſte the wordes of trueth, what ſoeuer our fathers haue vainely taught vs, and yet we are not in ſecuritie. But a thirde enimie is in the harte of man, that the worde of God may not haue his perfect honour, and that is an opinion conceyued of earthlie thinges, and planting of holynes in corruptible creatures, as in Meates, Drinkes, Dayes, Gar-*

mentes, conditions of life, places, tymes, Ceremonies, neyther hearing our Sauiour Christ, that God is a spirite, and onely hee is to bee worshipped in Spirite and Trueth. Neither his Apostle Paule, That the Element of that worlde commende vs not vnto God, for neyther if we eate, are we euer the worse: neither if we eate not, are we euer the better. These and many great temptations stand against vs assoone as we would giue ouer our selues to the worde of God, whiche is the beginning of a christian life. Trowe you that in the continuance of our course and journey, before we come at our Sauiour Christ, shall we not be sifted and tryed to see what is within vs? And you (good Maistres H.) so applie this to your selfe, tell mee howe you haue learned Christ, hath his Gospell bene peaceable in you from the first day till nowe, without all contradiction? Was your mynde neuer puffed vp in vayne imaginations? Did the traditions & perswasions of men neuer shake your thoughte? Haue you not bene tempted with opinions of creatures, as though some were more holy, some more prophane? I knowe as you long after Christ and desire his trueth in single heart: so his grace you haue not, without sharpe and bitter tryalls, and the more freely the worde of God shall possesse your soule, and fill your heart with all desire of it, the more you shall feele what fight is against it, looke for the like in all your life, and when you approche to the true feare of God, prepare your heart to the strongest assault. The worde of God thus made knowen vnto vs, and when we followe it with all our soule, that wee may haue a liuely faith to reioyce at the promises of God, to feare at his threatninge, and feele a full perswasion of a certaine

taine performance of all his wordes: O Lorde, what is the malice of Sathan! And though many temptations are against vs, the longe prosperitie of the wicked in which they triumphe, whylest the goodnesse of God prouoketh them still to repentance, the bitter sighting of the godly, in which they mourne vnder manie crosses, whyles God maketh their faith pretious before him: these haue rooted quite out of the heartes of the vngodly, the faith and trueth whiche they owe vnto God, so that against all his iudgementes, they haue opened their mouth, and said aloude: Where is the promise of his comming? And against all his mercies they haue proclaymed warre, and saide, They wil not haue Christ to reigne ouer them. But these temptations Christ hath ouercome in vs, and giuen vs his spirite, in which we knowe assuredlie that the Lord reigneth: neyther slacketh he his comminge, as many accounte slacknes, but he will come, and his glorie shalbe knowen. And yet we are not in peace, but Sathan will sifte vs another way: he will laye our sinnes before vs, to make vs feare, that tht promises of God belonge not vnto vs, and this of all temptations is the greatest, yet we feare not, for what belongeth to all our sinnes, which Christ hath not borne? sorrowe, sicknes, death, hell, condemnation, were they not in his body, and are they not all crucified vpon the crosse? Is he not risen from them, & hath he not broke the chaynes of death, and so is ascended into glorie? If this bee my feare because I am a sinner, rather let mee reioyce, for Christ hath taken my sinnes vpō him, & hath buried thē deeper then the bottome of the Sea, he hath led it openly in triumphe, and nayled it vpon the crosse frō henceforth

& for euermore it hath no strēgth, whosoeuer seeme to colour it as redd as scarlet, or make it like purple, it is still nothing, and casteth but a vayne terrour before our eyes: We will neuer denie this but freelie confesse it, that we be miserable sinners, and not worthie to lifte vp our eyes to heauen, but who will lay our sinnes to our charge, nowe God hath iustified vs? or what sinne can rest vpon vs, now Christ hath washed them awaye? That which once was in fight with Christ, and he hath ouercome it, who shall set too his hande the seconde time, to make the victorie perfect? This is true, and euerlasting trueth hath sealed it vp, that sinne is abolished for euer and euer, howsoeuer wee feare or tremble, or bee faint harted, yet before the Lorde with whom our life is hidde, there is no perill, no daunger, no feare, but peace & righteousnes without ende. Let our sinnes be neuer so great, neither wee nor our sinnes can chaunge the newe Testament, that God is mercifull to our sinnes, and will blot out all our transgressions: therefore this care is past, that our sinnes be many, the more they are, the greater is his mercy, who hath forgiuen them. And this is the token which God hath giuen vs, that we are his, because we are grieued with our sinnes, for our Sauior Christ ouercame sinne with paynes and sufferinges which belong vnto it, and this is the badge of our redemption, to be made like him in afflictions, wee haue sinne, and abhorre it, it woundeth vs with feare, it setteth before vs condemnation, we haue a sence and feeling of Gods anger against it, and hell gnaweth vppon our soules because of transgression. O blessed state, and treasure of gladnes, this was the Image of Christe

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When he ouercame ſinne, a marke of my redemption in myne owne fleſhe, that I ſhould not fainte. As the ſunne maketh the day, and the night darkenes, ſo this affliction of ſinne is the badge and cogniſance of our certaine forgiuenes. And herein ſee the goodnes of God, which turneth all things to the beſt to thoſe that loue him. Through feare of ſinne the Diuell fighteth againſt vs, without feare of ſinne we could neuer haue boldnes: through anguiſhe of heart the Diuell would ouerwhelme vs with ſorrowe: without anguiſh of hart we could neuer haue ioye. In feelinge Gods anger, the Diuell would make vs to diſpaire: without feelinge his threatning, and trembling before him, we could neuer haue ſtregth of faith, that his mercies are for euer. In all ſuffrings I am like to Chriſt, they are the marks of mine adoption, that I am his childe. Doe wee not heare the Lorde? Him ſelfe doeth ſpeake, If wee bee without correction, then are we baſtardes and not ſonnes: *and to ſhewe what our correction ſhalbee, hee ſayeth in an other place:* If we bee planted with him into the ſimilitude of his death, then ſhall wee alſo be partakers of his reſurrection. *Who hath heard ſo great ſaluation as this? Euery weapon wherewith the enemie ſtriketh, the ſame armeth vs to greater ſaluation: And euery wounde that we doe receyue, the ſame confirmeth vs to a ſurer life. Then (as before I ſaide) care not for ſinne, for that is aboliſhed, ſo here I maye adde, care not for hell, for the nearer wee feele it, the further we are from it. Let them feare ſinne that feele it not, and let them be afraide of condemnation that knowe not what it is, vppon whom deſtruction ſhall come ſodenlie as an armed man. Our eyes haue bene*

kept waking, and we haue seene our sinnes: our harts haue fainted before the anger of the Lorde, And wee haue not despised his heauenlie callinge, therfore in the day of trouble, we shall haue rest. In this perswasion we will liue and die: and if our soules should melte for feare within vs, although the Lorde should kill vs, yet would we trust in him. Abraham beleeued in the Lorde, and it was imputed vnto him for righteousnes, against hope hee beleeued vnder hope: and if our hope seemed to be taken from vs, yet would wee patientlie wayte the Lords leasure, vntill hee saue our hope agayne, that at the least our faith might haue againe the glorie and trueth of full assurance. Another thing we must labour in, and in another thinge wee shall haue temptation, and that is, that wee may see what is the glorie of God and immortall life: herein lett vs meditate in our beddes, and thinke on this in our secret places, in the middest of our companies, let these cogitations be often in our hartes, and in all places let these be our muses. When we shal apprehende with all the seruauntes of God what is the height, the bredth, the length, the depth, wee shall knowe that the glorie is great of immortalitie, and he is onely to bee beleued, who shall shine in honour when this vanitie is ouerpast His strength is great that layde the foundations of the world, and his brightnes exceeding, that made the Sunne and the Moone. His treasure and ritches, are aboue measure, who hath giuen Princes their golde and siluer and other pretious stones for the honour of man: he in deede is of excellent maiestie, who is King of Kings, and Lord of Lordes, and his power is aboue all, who maketh sickneſſe his messengers, and death

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his minister, till he shall abolishe them both. For his mercies are vnspeakable, that forgiueth vs all our sinnes, and his goodnes is great, who hath had regarde to the children of men. From nothing hee brought vs into life, he kept vs from the graue, he will restore vs, and make vs see his glorie. When I would thinke on this, my soule is compassed with dulnes of flesh, that I cannot see the fulnes of his fauour: When I would consider in my heart what is his grace: Darkenesse ouershadoweth myne vnderstading, & all my thoughts doe vanishe in his immortalitie. When I would speake of his louing kindnes, my tonge cleaueth to the roote of my mouthe, and my wordes sticke fast within my lippes. But this one thinge in all myne infirmities I can perceyue, that his glorie is exceeding great, whose glorie I can not comprehende, and the life is longe, appointed vnto man, where his heart and minde can see no ende. If all the worlde were a flowing water, and euery yeare one droppe should be diminished, the Sea should be all made drye, and the bottomes of the deepe should appeare, before he shall cease to lyue, whom God hath raysed from the dead, and this breadth & widenesse betweene heauen and earth, if it should bee filled vp, and euery yeare but one handfull of earth added to the worke: yet sooner should the great distance bee closed vp, and the emptie places made full, then hee shall cease from ioye and gladnes, who shall stande in the resurrection of the iust. This is the glorie that hath neither spot nor blemishe, before which me thinketh, not only Princes and the glorie of the world, but the Sunn and Moone & all the hostes of heauen are nothing els but meere vanitie, for death shadoweth the glorie of

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man, though hee spred his braunches neuer so farre, yet the graue closeth vp in little roome the ambitious heart, which before was enlarged from East to West. And the Heauens that are high and free from death, yet are holden vnder the tyrannie of enuious and consuming tyme, in which they shalbe chaunged: Only the Lord is in honor and maiestie, who hath set eternitie rounde about him, and cast out tyme vnto confusion. Oh Lorde, where are their eyes that see not this, or their hearts that see and regarde it not! Who hath bewitched them, in the countenances of men, to carrie the heartes of beastes, and to forget the latter ende. The Lorde turne them that runne astray, that they may knowe and see where is their glorie, but the temptations haue ouertaken them. Which are against our honour when the Lorde shall deliuer them from euill, they shall giue thankes and reioyce with vs, that they also haue eyes to see. And blessed are you (good Mistres H.) and God hath visited you in an acceptable time, whose heart he hath touched with feare, & whose affections he hath filled with hunger and thirst, that you should mourne for the redemption that is in Christ, and be pleased with nothing but with the grace of his countenance. This is a Schoolemistres to bringe you vnto him, and a bond to tye you faste, that you shall not be seperated: and accomplishe I beseeche you, this good worke of his grace, till you loue the Lord withall your heart, and till you can say with the blessed Apostle, I desire to be dissolued, and to be with Christ. *For this purpose wee are chastised of the Lorde, and whē our faith is tryed, at the last is shalbe made strong, that with it we may quench all the fierie dartes of Sa-*

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than, and in righteousnes and peace, and ioye of the holy Ghoſte, runne the course that is ſet before vs, till in a bleſſed iſſue of happie dayes, with a good ſpirite we may ſay boldlie, Lorde, nowe letteſt thou thy ſeruaunt depart in peace. *Which I beſeeche God the father of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt, the God of mercie, and Father of all conſolation graunt vnto you, Amen.*

Pray, pray, pray, praye, this is your beſt ſeruice whereſoeuer your duetie is moſt bounde.

Letters of Ed. Der. to Maiſtres B.

GRace, mercie and peace from God our Father, &c. I had much leuer good Maiſtres B. come my ſelf then write vnto you, but as other things are farre contrarie to my deſire, ſo is it in my comming vnto you, & I am conſtrayned rather to write then to come, but God appointes our wayes, whether I come and be with you, or elſe be other where and heare from you, I truſt and am perſwaded, that both I ſhall heare from you, and you ſhall haue the ſame conſtancie in the loue of trueth and ſtill increaſe in the knowledge of it, till the good grace of God haue made the worke perfect that it hath begunne, and you with all your harte and all your ſoule doe feare the Lorde, and delight in all obedience of his holy will. Whereunto though we be ſufficientlie perſwaded by the nature of godlines it ſelfe, which all men doe prayſe, and the righteous doe loue: yet a greater prouocation is in you, becauſe God hath giuen you a good eſtate, in whiche your example ſhall doe good to many, and becauſe good hath filled you with a hartie affection to teſtifie his Religion, that you

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may accordingly in all weldoing surmount the praise of your profession, and especially because he that hath called you is holy, that you may expresse his similitude and likenes in all your wayes, and this good course through euill dayes, when God of his mercy shall make streight vnto vs wee shall see then what is the latter end. Our hartes shalbe satisfied with it, and our tonge shal speake not as the world doth, blessed are the riche mē or blessed are the mighty, for all these haue winges to flie away, and highe estates to sit downe in the dust, when man must goe make his bed in the darke, and say to corruption thou art my father, and to the worme thou art my mother and sister, but our souge shalbe in better hermonie, and wee shall say with the Prophet Dauid, blessed is the man that feareth the Lorde and delighteth greatly in his commaundemēts: For when all hatred shall growe against this, and all aduersity shall stryue to come vppon it, yet all is nothing and shall not moue it. For when our hart is strengthened with this grace, wee see our portions in all estates and tymes: in discredit, we see praise, in powerty, riches, in anger, fauour, in darknes, light, in bondage, libertie, and in death, life, yea whatsoeuer in weaknes of bodie, in enuie of tyme, in vncertainty of estate, in danger of life, or in any thinge els, because nothinge can seperat vs from the loue of God, nothinge can turne vnto our harme, for wee haue his promise that is able to performe it, that to those that loue God all things happen for the best. This purpose of life is soone had, and this course is easly begon, but the frute of it doth not vade nor the gladnes of it shall neuer bee loste so that wee shall not, nor by the grace of God wee will not for so

litle labour lose so great a reward, nor for a litle pleasure which vainlie wee thinke is in other thinges, receaue the reward of our foolishnes, which assuredlie wee knowe hath euerlastinge griefe, wee haue not so vnfructfullie learned Christ nor so vnhappelie genen witnesse of his trueth, But better thinges belonge vnto vs, in better wayes wee will run our course, in a better hope lay downe our bodies: The children of the worlde shall make the worlde their portion, wee looke for another citty of which the Lord is the workeman, and wee will not buylde vp our vnhappines in the vayne desires and concupiscence of this world, neither yet (seinge God is good to vs to fill our dayes with peace) will wee deny any comfort that is offered vs in this present pilgrimage, but seeinge the earth is the Lordes and all that therin is, wee haue perfect pleasure in frendes, riches, authoritie, honnor: if all bee his? All are pure: if all bee of him? In all is pleasure: for where his kingdome is, there is righteousnes and peace and ioye of the holy Ghost: and sorrowe and sinne is cast out, only let vs eare as all thinges are good, so we vse them: and as they are corrupt, so to let them alone. S^t. Paule teacheth that to the pure all thinges are pure, but to the impure all thinges are impure: And the thinges of this worlde are made accordinge to the conscience of man: Houlde this to remember it at noone dayes, and lett our reynes instruct vs in it in the night season, that wee foell our hartes inflamed with the loue of God, and that it may bee acceptable vnto vs as our owne life, to sett forth his praise: That wee acknowledge his glorie whiche shineth in all his

workes

his worke, and then the Lorde hath ſet vs in a large rome of libertie, where we walke with boldnes in good delight of his creatures: and in deed and in trueth this it is when this affliction hath taken roote within mee, and I feele the worke of it perpetually within my minde, whether I be following my Hauke or my bowle, I make a more acceptable ſacrifice to God, then the harte barren of this loue of God can doe: though the knee bowe or the tongue ſay, prayſed be the Lorde, for euery one that ſayeth, Lorde, Lorde, ſhall not enter into the kingdome of heauen, but in whom ſo euer the loue of God doeth reigne, and hath driuen out the lewde deſires of a diſſolute minde, him God hath choſen, and the ſpirit of his ſonne Chriſt cryeth within him, Our Father: yet I meane not here to iuſtifie theſe worldly minded men, to whom the day is to ſhort for their vaine playes, except they reach it out till midnight at Cardes and Dice: ſuch people as they, commonly fill all their delightes with blaſphemie, ſo lett them knowe that the loue of the liuing God they neuer felt, but the god of this worlde hath blinded their vnbeleeuing heartes, and in their vncleannes there I leaue them, till the ſinnes of their youth bee rotten in their bones, that they may ſinke deepe in their owne ſhame. My meaning is, that the man of God whoſe ſoule doeth thirſte to ſee his glorie, and hath the ioye of his life in immortalitie, in reſpect of the which hee accounteth all the worlde to be but dunge: I ſaye, that man may haue true delight in the dayes of his vanitie, the ſmelling of the dogge, the flying of the birde, the qualities of all creatures, they were made for him: and he is iniurious to the blood of Chriſt, that thinkes

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he may not vse them: but all these things are good for our recreation, to comfort the frailtie of weake bodyes, and to bring refreshing to a wearie spirite: which end, if we forget, and make it our pastime, and so call it, then we turne our pastime into sinne. For what is our tyme that we are wearie of it, or what is our life that seemeth so slowe to passe, are we grieued with the light which the Lorde hath set in the Heauens, or is the feeling of our body burdenous vnto vs, or our eyelydes payned with being open, or are our eares wounded with the sounde of the ayre, or what griefe, what care, what sorrowe is it, why we wishe our time forgotten & past? Surely Iob knewe not this when hee saide, His time passed faster thē a poste: nor Dauid knewe it not whē he thought his life but a spanne longe: and surely he hath but a wretched lyfe, & let him not loue it, who is fayne to runne to the birdes of the ayre, and the beastes of the fielde, to seeke some comfort against it. And therefore (good Maistres B.) let pastime alone, and be not wearied with your good dayes, your tymes are passed meetely well, and you haue seene 40. yeares filled and gone, the residue behinde will passe with them, You shall not holde them if you would, but passtyme and they will dwell togither, till our appointed time shall come: and one ende shalbe vnto all. But then you shall see another state, and this enimitie betweene vs and it, shalbe taken away: We shall not be wearie of it to wishe it gone, and it will not bee wearie of vs to weare vs away, but Tyme and we shall dwell togither, and the glorie of God shalbe eternally before vs, and we before his Maiestie in immortalitie. A blessed state, a hope of lyfe, a glorious body, a heauēly minde,

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and woe be to all these tyme passers of, that know how to delight in this, but haue more pleasure in all vncleannes: When the end of their labour shall come vpon them, they shall feele more griefe in one day, then after shalbe eased world without ende. And in one sentence of an angrie Iudge (goe you cursed into eternall fire) they shalbe wounded with that miserie, whiche worlde without end shall rest vpon them, and their olde pastime shall neuer more be founde: but this is the portion of them that knowe not God. But you good Maistres B. haue alreadie passed the dayes of your ignorance, and the kingdome of heauen is come vnto you with power: you loue the trueth of the Lorde Iesus, and all false wayes you doe abhorre: you doe feele the hope of the Elect of God, and it hath quenched the desires of vngodlie. Pray still, that you may haue increase: and read the Scriptures, in whiche you shall haue comfort: these will leade you in a perfect way, and neyther Paule nor Peter haue a more blessed end, then is for vs, in a like pretious faith: and I (as I am bounde) will beseeche the God of mercie, and father of our Lord Iesus Christ, that he will looke vpon you, to fill you with his grace and holy spirite, that it may guyde you and all your children before you, and your houshold committed to your charge, that you may dwell in the newe and blessed Testament of the forgiuenes of sinnes through faith in Christ Iesus, who hath destroyed the workes of the Diuell, and is able to keepe you for euer more. And to his gracious defence, I hartely leaue you and all yours.

Yours in the Lord *Ed. Dering.*

To Maistres B.

THe grace of our Lord Iesus Christ be with you euer, Amen. Good Maistres Baret, *howe fayne I would be with you, God knoweth, and howe I am indebted to doe good in your house, if I should not confesse, I must needes accuse my selfe of much vnthankefulnes, but God alone disposeth all our wayes, to be so as pleaseth him, whom hartily I beseeche for his sonnes sake, blesse vs with that blessing whiche hee gaue his Apostle, that in all places wee may bee vnto him in Iesu Christ, a sweete sauour of life vnto life to all his saints with whom wee are. So shall I more gladlie walke all the wayes of his appointment, and you more willinglie beare with myne absence, the will of God bee done in all thinges. When you are at Braye, if the Lorde will, I shalbe more quiet with you. In the meane time (good Maistres) so beleeue as you haue seene and hearde, and praye for me that I may liue to his glorie, who hath shewed me such mercie, that I may say with the Prophet Dauid:* What shall I giue againe for all that he hath giuen mee? *And so doe you reioyce in the blessing that GOD hath giuen you, that more and more your estate here may be a sure testimonie of a more blessed hope, that shall one day bee reuealed, when honor and glorie shall succeed in the place of labour and sorrowe that nowe aboundeth. The Lord blesse you and all yours, keepe you and giue you a plentifull blessing in his newe Testament, and in his kingdome, which is righteousnes, and peace, and ioye in the holy Ghost, the glorie whereof shall not bee darkened, when the Sunne and Moone shall lose their*

light,

light, and fraine men with desire of it, that shall fill vs once with the countenance of the Lorde. A glorious hope in an earthly tabernacle, but a more glorious performance in a heauenly creature, when we shalbe free from sinne and death, and be made like vnto him that sitteth at the right hande of maiestie and power. Which tyme the Lorde God fulfill in the goodnes of his pleasure, for our soules hope: in whom we haue setled our hope. Commendations, &c.

Yours Ed: Deringe.

To Maistres B.

THe grace of our Lord Iesus Christ bee with you euer, Amen. I am sorie that hitherto I could not come vnto you, & I would be more sorie, if you should thinke I had leuer be any where then in your house, I had thought shortly to haue come, and I felte my selfe somewhat stronge and able to trauell, but nowe on friday last the eleuēth of this moneth, I had a feauer, and fiue or sixe dayes after I felte it, and my stomacke is very ill euer since, and my cough much increaseth. This is my health that God giueth me. But let him do his will, he is the God of life, and one day will abolishe these troublesome thinges, and make vs feele health in immortalitie, and I beseeche him for his Christes sake to remember vs in his goodnes, that wee may knowe all his mercies, and then I am well assured both you and I, and all weake bodyes, shall so little care for the frayeltie of these tabernacles, that we will reioyce in the remembrance of putting them of, to thinke that wee

shall

ſhall ſee and take holde of him that liueth euer, and will one day make theſe mortall bodyes, like vnto the glorious body of his beloued ſonne. This we knowe & in this we are comforted: and holde it faſt good Miſtreſſe B. euen as you will holde your happie dayes: for the hope of it ſhall not be confounded. but when all our enimies haue ſpent their euill willes, and can doe no more hurt vnto vs, he ſhalbe on our right hande whom we haue looked for, and he ſhall call vs with that bleſſed voyce, Come ye bleſſed of my Father. *Let vs praye to vnderſtande this, for it hath pleaſure & effectuall gladnes, more then all the faire countenances of the world, in which in deede there is nothinge but vanitie of vanities, and all is vanitie: and thinke good Miſtreſſe B. howe many occaſions are before vs to cauſe vs to forget this, or to let the deſire of it, to bee quenched in vs, or at the leaſt to fill our ſelues with other pleaſures of the worlde, but God ſhall keepe you from the corruptions of the worlde, and giue vnto you a wiſe heart, which euery daye may ſearche your thoughtes, and ſuffer you neuer to forget your latter ende: and ſeeing euery day doeth bring you neare vnto it, let euery day kindle more your affections, that you may loue it vnto the ende: and then our hope ſhalbe full, and our mouthes opened for euer, Amen.*

Yours Ed. Deringe.

To Maiſtres B.

THe grace of our Lorde Ieſu Chriſt be with youe-ner. As I truſt the Lord doeth ſtrengthen you in

better health, that you may liue to his prayse, so I am desirous to heare also of your amendment, but much more (as God hath made manifest in you many tokens of his grace) so I hartily pray that you may bee made euen as Paule to moorne still in this earthlie tabernacle, and to saye vnfaimedlie, I desire to bee dissolued, and to be with Christ: this is that good issue of life to which I haue often prayed that I might attayne vnto it: this is that measure of grace, whiche as I am most bounde, so hartely I beseech our God and Sauiour, that it may plentifully be powred vppon you. And if wee shalbe made in our lines so happie, then haue we a dwelling in perfect peace: and in deede we be receyued into the couenaunts of the newe Testament, that wee should be filled with ioye of the holy Ghost. For what can disquiet vs, or what can bee grieuous vnto vs, if in the face of Iesus Christ we see our rising agayne from the graue, and feare not before the shaddow of death, all other afflictions they are but ministers vnto this, & in the presence of death they are dispersed, and they doe not followe vs vnto the darke places. If God will haue mercie vpon vs to blesse vs into this victorie, the hath bee giuen vs our inheritaunce in pleasant places, and our portion in a happie lot. What so euer enimies are against vs, they shall striue in vayne: and all things contrarie vnto vs, shall haue no strength, for beyonde death there is no power in them, and death it selfe is dispised in our eyes. If we felt not this in our heartes, but would seeke outwarde testimonie of men, let him speake that findeth any greater feare then this. The sicke person or prisoner may bee loth to dye, but the dead man he feareth no euill: and they that liue in

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prosperitie, this is not their feare least they ſhould haue a fall, but it is death that is bitter vnto all them that haue peace in their riches. Seeing this then is the greateſt tyrant that maketh Princes tremble, and that anguiſh of harte that turneth all pleaſure into wormwoode, what ſoeuer is vnder the ſunne, good maiſtres B. as you are, ſo abyde: and as you haue receyued, ſo abounde till the good graces of the liuinge GOD haue made you ſtronger then ſinne or death: ſo ſhall your dayes be all in bleſſing, and your accounted tymes haue true delight till the latter ende doe ſhine in hope. So ſhall you bee bolde to ſaye with Dauid: Surely the Lord will deliuer me from the ſnare of the hunter, and from the noyſome peſtilence: I ſhall not bee afrayde of the feare of the night, nor of the arrowe that flyeth in the day, nor of the peſtilence that walketh in the darkenes, nor of the plague that deſtroyeth at noone: I haue ſet the moſt highe to bee my refuge, and there ſhall no euill come neare my tabernacle. *The Lorde bleſſe vs in this good hope, & make ſtronge our confidence in this perſwaſion, that at laſt we may dwell in ioye and gladnes: if ſtare haue often recourſe into our fraile bodyes, becauſe we carrie in vs corruption, whiche is the ſtrength of death, yet that feare ſhall not alwayes grieue vs, for our hope is perfect, and ſhall not be ſhaken. Wee ſhall goe but as Saint Paule, and Peter, Abraham and Iſaac haue gone before: and not onely they, but oure Fathers, our Mothers, and our deareſt friendes are gone with them: and all that are behinde ſhall ouertake vs. The trouble of the trauell muſt needes appeare light in the middeſt of ſo happie companie: or if their ſone haue*

not such force in us that Parentes and Friendes, Apostles, Prophetes, Patriarkes, and all the Saintes of God can make vs say, Let vs dye with the righteous, and let our latter ende be as vnto them: yet sure when among the dead I haue seene Christ, and in the graue haue founde the God of glorie, I shall say with a perfect hearte, Christ is my life, and death is myne aduantage. What then remayneth more vnto vs, but to striue faithfully that we may come vnto that, that God may worke with vs, & with his saintes, and we may be partaker with the happie Prophete, to see the louing kindnes of the Lorde, which is better then lyfe, and to say with him: As the hart longeth after the water brookes, so my soule longeth to see the Lord: and in the meane season that we yet fulfill our accomptes dayes, whiche the Lorde graunt for his Churches sake, that you may doe euen vntill olde age and many yeares, in good increase of your children children, & happie peace of his chosen people. In the meane while I say, that your hope may be precious before you, and in this earthlie tabernacle yet may haue your conuersation in the highest heauen, from thence looking for a Sauiour, euen Iesus Christ the righteous, who shall change this corruptible body, to make it like to his glorious body, in that blessed time whiche shall scatter away all affliction, & seale within that happie assurance of immortalitie, whiche shalbe in the presence of the God of glorie: when this weake body shall haue a recompence (of a fewe sorrowfull dayes) in euerlasting righteousnes. In whiche hope the Lorde graunt many yeares you may rest.

Yours Ed. Dering.

To

To Maistres B.

THe Lord who is riche in mercie, keepe vs euer in the assured couenant of his newe Testament made in Iesus Christ, that we may feele the forgiuenes of our sinnes, and reioyce in the hope of eternall life. Amen. I am sure you wilbe gladde (good maistres B.) to heare of our safe comming home. And I would be gladde to heare of all your well dooing, at your Saint Ellins, & therefore I writte vnto you. Both to heare agayne that God continueth his good blessinges towardes you, and to certifie you that (I thanke God) I am nowe safe at Shenfildes. I haue not yet taken the plaster, but this day I haue begonne to drinke Maistres P. Water. Let it haue the worke which God will: For in health our meate doe not nourishe vs, but by his worde. In sickneſſe medicines can doe vs no good, except he blesſe them. We haue no newes here to write of but of countrie thinges, scarse worth the telling, and lesse worse the practisinge of it could be amended, euery man goeth after his Oxe and his horse: and most doe glorifie God no more then their bruite beast. If they bee like vnto vs which are in the Court and in the Citie, that the one be as ambitious, the other as couetous as we bee brutishe, and God be forgotten of vs all alike, we may take vs againe the Lamentation of Ieremie: for it is the great mercies of God that we bee not consumed. But if such be the miserie in the worlde, wee that are not of the worlde, but by Christ are taken out of the worlde: Let vs not loue the worlde which is such an enemie vnto God, and then we shall not be condemned with the worlde when Christ shall come in glorie.

And the Lord be prayſed, who hath giuen vs eyes to ſee and eares to heare, that we might bee wiſe harted: not to ſay peace and truce with ſuch things, with ſuch men crye peace and truce, but rather to haue our life hidden with Chriſt in God, and on his right hande beholde the peace which paſſeth all vnderſtandinge, and good Maiſtres B. increaſe in this, God hath giuen you a happie helper, who is willinglie leadde to all righteouſnes: The Lord God make his good worke perfect for his ſonnes ſake, in him, in you, and in vs all that loue the comming of Jeſus Chriſt, Amen.

Yours in the Lord *Ed. Dering.*

A Letter of Ed. Der. to Miſtres H.

GRace and peace, &c. I haue heard (good Maiſtres H.) of your heauie eſtate, that in many troubles the Lorde doeth exerciſe you, but I truſt you are alſo taught to ſay alwayes before God, Thy will be done, *and if this be your prayers, then knowe that nothinge happeneth but by his appointement, and be contented with all that he hath done, ſo that your heart may beare you witneſſe, that of all thinges the Lord is moſt deare vnto you: and for your troubles, giue onely your hearte to loue the Lorde, and they ſhall ſeeme neyther great nor ſtronge vnto you. For what can bee great, if our heart be prepared to ſay with Saint Paule,* That we reioyce in afflictions, becauſe they ſhall breede in vs a hope which ſhall neuer make vs aſhamed: *or what can be great, if God haue taught vs,* That the momentaine affliictions of this worlde, they are not

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worthie of the glorie that ſhalbe reuealed vnto vs: or what can ſeeme great, if we heare the Apoſtle: Brethren reioyce in afflictions, reioyce exceedingly: when you fall into many and great tribulations. Surely good Maiſtres H. all is nothing, for a fraile body, a ſhort life, a ſinfull creature, what can come vnto it that ſhould diſmay it: nay howe ſhould we not (if we knowe it well) bee glad, if death alſo were at our beddes ſide, that we might at once ſee the outmoſt malice of the diuell, and after for euermore bee deliuered from him. A great cloude of witneſſes (as th'Apoſtle ſayeth) are cited vnto in the eleuenth Chapter to the Hebrues, of which euery one ſhould bee our example to beare all croſſes that the Lord doeth ſende, knowing that he is delighted with vs, when wee bee faithfull to abyde theſe momentaine and light chaſtiſementes. Iob, Dauid, Paule, our Sauiour Chriſt himſelfe, howe many things ſuffered they, howe are we not aſhamed to refuſe the cauſe which they haue borne, and way well your owne caſe what it is, and you ſhall ſee little cauſe of ſorrowe in it, or if you compare it with other, none at all. Hath your huſbande bene vnkinde vnto you, beare it, and you ſhall winne him at the laſt: if not, thanke God that you can continewe louing and obedient euen vnto an vnkinde huſbande. And I aſſure you in this one vertue there is more comfort and ioye, then there can be griefe in all the diſcourteſies of men: and what is that croſſe of yours in reſpect of that which Abigaill did ſo longe and patientlie beare? But your ſonne hath grieued you much. yea but you haue not the hundreth parte of the grieſe that Dauid might haue had for his ſonne Abſolon: and will you be more

greened then he? Your ſonne I truſt, ſhall yet proue well, and you ſhall ſee his recouerie: if not, this maner of diſeaſe is rather a teſtimonie of a conſcience griued with his euill doing, then an argument of his deſtruction, ſo that euen in this griefe you haue great cauſe of ioye: and what if God take from you the comfort of one childe, leauing againe vnto you the comfort of a great many: Will you, or can you repine againſt the louing kindnes of the Lorde? Howe gladde would Dauid haue bene of other good children in the loſſe of one euill: yet you haue loſt none, neither is your ſonne knowen to bee ſo euill, but you may reioyce in him againe: yet if all things were as euill as you could imagine, what then? Where is our loue to Ieſus Chriſte, that gaue his precious body to the death for our ſinnes? If we will not leaue ſonne, daughter, and our own life for his ſake, can one heare fall from your ſonnes heade but at Chriſtes commaundement? Is not he head of his Church, and all thinges happen they not vnto vs as he will? Herein you ſhall knowe you loue God aboue all, when you can forget the childe of your wombe, for his ſake. And therefore (good Maiſtres H.) giue not your ſelfe to any inordinate affections to offende God, and hurt your ſelfe, but ſay and thinke, Thy will bee done, O Lorde, and when the time ſhall come of our latter ende, we ſhall neuer haue ende of the bleſſed life which God ſhall giue vnto you, and to all his ſaintes in that day. Thus in haſte I am conſtrayned to ceaſe to write, but I will not ceaſſe to pray, that God may bleſſe you, and giue you his ioyfull Spirite, to fill you with all ſpirituall comfort, againſt the tentations of the worlde, and all the enuie of the Diuell. And pray

for

for me I beſeech you, that I may account all the world to be but donge, to the ende I may winne Ieſus Chriſt, (to whom) the liuing and eternall God I commit you for euer, Amen. The xix. of Aprill.

Yours in the Lord Ieſus, the onely
forgiuenes of all our ſinnes,
Edward Deringe.

Letters of Ed. De. to Miſtres K.

THe Lord God direct vs with his holy ſpirite, that we may loue and feare him vnto the ende, Amen. It greeueth me good Maiſtres K. that you ſhould bee ſo longe at Hendon *as nowe you haue bene, and all this while I could finde no leyſure to come vnto you, & whatſoeuer my faulte hath bene herein, I will make no other excuſe, but deſire you to forgiue it. And I pray God though I ſee you not, yet I may ſo remember you, as I am bounde, and ſo my not comminge vnto you ſhall greeue me the leſſe. Nowe touchinge your owne caſe, I knowe you are wyſe to ſee, that the Lord giueth you newe inſtructions to be wiſe in him, and to giue ouer your ſelfe vnto him. For as God hath bleſſed you many wayes, and giuen you a good callinge in the worlde, So he viſiteth you euery day, and humbleth you with many chaſtiſementes before him. God hath giuen you huſbande, children, famelie, and other bleſſings, but you enioye none of them without a croſſe, ſometime one thing, ſometime another, and commonly your owne weake and ſicklie body makes you that you can not haue your ioys as you would. Yea I doubt not,*

but

but it is so abridged vnto you, that sometime it grieueth you that you cannot eyther haue care ouer your house, as you wisbe, or attende on your children as you desire, or reioyce with your husbande as otherwise you might. But this griefe God recompenceth with great benefite, for our Saniour Christ is our good warrant, that this is the lot of Gods saintes, to enioye his blessinges with afflictions, so that the more that you bee sorrowfull, the more you be sure that the liuing God hath giuen you your portion: And so your sorrowe is ioye vnto you. Besides this, the mingling of your ioye with sorrowe, and wealth with woe, is a happie temprince vnto you of heauen with earth, that you should neither loue nor rest in this, aboue that which is meete, but acknowledge, all is but vanitie, so loue it as transitorie things, and haue your great delight with the Lord alone, Who is vnto you health, prosperitie, ioye, and eternall life.

This good Maistres K. you knowe, but yet this I also put you in minde of. for though God haue blessed you, yet you are but a weake woman, and haue neede (in the common frayeltie of mans nature) to be stirred vp with exhortatio. Remember therefore euer that which is the ende of all, Feare God, and keepe his commandements. For this is the whole scope of our life, which when we haue brought to his appointed ende, wee shall see the hope, which we haue long looked for: and when immortalitie hath brought happines into light, and scattered away our feare, we shall saye then, Blessed be the daye in whiche firste wee learned to feare the Lorde. And the Lorde blesse you with his holy spirit, that you may in the middest of other care, haue pleasure in this, and in other sorrowe reioyce in the Lord,

and

and alwayes reioyce. Cõmende me ℣ pray you, to your litle ones, Nan, Besse, and Marie, And the Lord make you and maister K. gladde parentes of good children. Amen. From Tobie, the last of Februarie 1575.

Yours in the Lord Iesus, Ed. Dering.

To Maistres K.

THe grace of our Lord Iesu Christ bee with you euer, Amen. I thanke you good Maistres K. for your letter and for your medicine, and for your good will to him to whom you before did owe so litle. Touching my disease, I did soddainlie cogh and spit much blond, so that when with much forcing my selfe, I refrained, it ratteled in my throte, as if I had bene a dying: next day in the like sorte ℣ did, and once since the taking of these medicines for the staying of it, it is nowe stayed, but ℣ feele a great stopping of my winde, and much prouocation to coughe, whiche if I did, ℣ should spit blond as before. I pray you aske your Phisicion what he thinketh good to bee done. And good Maistres K. against all diseases and sicknesses of the body, doe as you doe, and increase it with an vnfayned testimonie of your owne heart. Committ your health, your sickenes, your body, your soule, your life, and your death, to him that died for vs, and is risen againe. A sicke body with such an ayde, hath greater treasure then the Queenes Iewell-house. Praye still, and pray for me. ℣ see the goodnes of God such towardes me, as (I thanke God) except sinne, I waighe not all the worlde a feather: and with as a gladde

minde I spite bloud, (I trust) as cleare spitle. To those that loue God, all thinges are for the best: hee hath a harde heart that beleeueth not this. For the Church, I commit it to the Lorde: the Lorde graunt with that affection that I owe vnto it, and for all my labour in it (I thanke God) I am guiltie neither of couetousnes, nor ambitio, but as God hath giuen me grace, I sought onely his glorie. I write this vnto you good Maistres K. because you knowe it, and that you may the more effectuallie remember him, that will knowe you When the worlde, your health, your corruptible bodie, death and sinne it self, haue done their worste. Comende me to Maister K. your little ones, to Maister R. The Lorde blesse vs all, that we make our bodies shake, & not our bodies vs. Vale in Christo Iesu. 25. Iul. 1575.

Tuus in Christo *Ed. Dering.*

To Maistres K.

THe Lord God who sheweth mercie to whom hee will shewe mercie, and haue compassion on whom he will haue compassion, accordinge to his loue with which he loued vs before the worlde was made, looke vpon vs, and leade vs in our wayes, that in righteousnes and holines, peace and ioye of the holy Ghost, wee may finishe our compas and come vnto him. Amen. If I could good Maistres K. doe as I should, then my wayes were perfect among men, but it is with mee as with manie othee, small hinderances to an vnwillinge minde, are occasion great enough to keepe vs from doing well. This hath made me to pretermit manie

duelies

duetie, which had bene better done. And I dare not make anie other excuse why I haue not written vnto you oftener: for though I haue in a wearie bodie manie things to doe, and could make excuses whiche you would easilie beleeue, yet sure I am, if slouthe and negligence were vtterlie gone, a fewe lines were soone written, that I could not want time for so little labour, this is true, & sit errata: medicina confessio. Touching my sickenes, hee that sent it he doeth rule it, and as he will so serue let it goe. I feele yet difficultie of breath and coughinge: and I see paleness am leaue abyding still; yet I thanke God I am so well, as we supposed all to haue seene you at Horden this next Monday, but God hath changed our waye, and by occasion we haue differred it, trusting yet to see you verie shortlie, if the Lord will, to whom we commit both your wayes and ours. And nowe good Maistres K. further I neede not write vnto you, for whiche cause yet especiallie you craue my letters, I knowe whom you haue beleeued, & vpon what grounde you stande, who hath sealed your persuasion in you, he is able to keepe that you haue committed vnto him, euen vntill that day, that the things of the worlde are changed before vs all. Affliction may be great, and make vs murmur; prosperitie may abounde and make vs proude, the worlde may fill our eyes and our eares, that sometime we may be blinde and not see our hope, our owne concupiscence may peraduenture stinge vs that wee forget the good workes wherein wee had delight, but the councell of the Highest standeth fast for euer, the Lord knoweth all that are his. In this tower of defence our dwelling is made for vs, and the gates of hell shall

not prevaile against vs. When wee sinne, wee must needes be sorrowfull, and to offende such a Saviour, it will greeue vs more then death it selfe: but to remember againe so assured hope, we can not but reioyce in the Lorde, and alwayes reioyce. Thus I leaue you to your owne hearte, where is your strong safetie: and to your secrete thoughtes, which comfort you in the night. And committing my selfe vnto your prayers, I beseeche God the Father of our Lorde Iesus Christe, to keepe you and yours. Commende me to your little ones, pardon me for writing in such piece of paper, I could hardlie gett this. Maister H. and my wife wishe to see you. The Lord keepe vs vnblameable in his sight. From Tobye, the xiiij. of August, 1575.

Your bounden in the Lord, *Ed. Deringe.*

To Maistres K.

THe Lord God direct vs in all our wayes, that they may bee vnblameable in his sight, and our faith may be strenghtened in the blessed hope of his elect, so that nothing be able to shake it from henceforth, from the boldnes and assurance of eternall life. Many and iust causes good Maistres K. haue kept mee, so that these holy dayes I could not see you, but I knowe no excuse why I could not write vnto you: and therfore for the one as I am sure you doe willinglie pardon me, so the other I beseeche you to except, both as a testimonie of my minde that I forget you not, and as a discharge of that duetie I owe vnto you: for if I should not faithfullie remember you, though you had other-

wise

wise done nothing for me, yet I were unworthie of so much good will. And if I should not as in bounden dueti be most carefull to strenghten and comfort that good purpose, whiche your selfe haue chosen for the course of your life, I were not worthie of the acquaintance of the saintes of God. Therefore departing from London againe (as I could not chuse) I haue yet written vnto you, as I must needes: And I hartelie praye that God may increase his goodnes in you, and earnestlie beseech you, as you haue receyued that, so you would abounde more and more, a short request and soone learde: but exceeding difficult to some to practize, & yet not difficult vnto you, but easie and light, as you can desire, for he that is borne of God ouercommeth the worlde. And the anointing (as Iohn saieth) which you haue receyued of God, dwelleth in you, and you needs not that any man teach you, but as the same anointing teacheth you all thinges, and it is true and not lyinge, and as it is taught you, you shall abyde in it. Marueil not that I write this vnto you, nor be vnwillinglie affected to heare of your owne happinesse. It is (as Salomon sayeth) an other mans mouth that prayseth you and not your owne, and what neede you feare. And I speake not deceitfullie, which I thanke God I hate, nor giue I titles, as Iob sayeth, which the Lorde doeth abhorre. But seeing (as I am perswaded) that in you, which Saint Iohn could see in the people to whom hee wrote and to whom he gaue so honorable prayse: why should not I be bolde vpon so good warrant to say also vnto you: You are the Lordes: and God who iustified then his Apostles wordes, he will iustifie them nowe and euer, for he is mercifull without ende. Lette vs not

then

then good Maistres K. bee henceforth sorrowfull or faint hearted: Paule and Peter, and all the Apostles and Prophetes haue spoken glorious thinges vnto vs, and we will beleeue them. And yet not they, but the spirit of God hath giuen vs this testimonie, and it is true. For what were the Romaynes, Corinthians, Galathians, and all other whome the Spirite nameth Saintes and Holy ones, were they not as wee? Fraile and weake as wee, and our faith as theirs? But wee feele a great deale of infirmitie in our selues, did not they so, and did not the spirit of God see more in them, then them selues could feele? yet it calleth thē saintes: yea and so it calleth vs, that wee should not feare: and therefore as I saide, I saye agayne, you are anoynted of the Lorde, and you shall not fall, if your heart beare you witnesse, that the profession which you make, is vnfained in you, as I am sure it beareth you witnesse. One care onelie wee haue, which also wee will haue vnto the ende: and that is, that we may glorifie him, who hath glorified vs. In this doing, as I accuse my selfe most aboue all other men, so I prayse not you a whit. For I knowe good Maistres K. herein you are too too faultie, and so is all flesh: our flesh, the world, and the Deuill, they are to strong for vs, but blessed be the Lorde God, who hath giuen vs victorie in Iesus Christ, and wee will doe if God giue vs grace, as his Apostles did, wee will chastise our bodyes, and bringe them in subiection, that all that knowe our religion, shall not blame our workes: And I thanke God for all that you haue obteyned: And I beseeche you increase and abounde more, that as hee will giue vs a full rewarde, so wee may offer vp our bodyes a

holy

holy ſacrifice, to prayſe his name, who hath had mercie vppon vs. And pray for me, that my handes & tonge may ioyne in the workes of Gods Saintes: and let vs all growe togither vnto that bleſſed hope, till wee haue founde that happie ſtrēght, by which the world is crucified vnto vs, and wee vnto the worlde: But the Lord that teacheth you, to him I leaue you: whom I beſeech to open your eies into ſo large & wyde a ſpiritual ſight, that you may yet more clearlie ſee and feele the glorie of God & immortalitie. Fare well good Maiſtres K. Commende mee to Nan, Beſſe, Marie. The Lorde bleſſe you with them euer, Amen.

Tuus in Chriſto, *Edwardus Deringe.*

A Letter of M. Ed. De. to the Ladie G.

The grace of our Lorde Ieſu Chriſt, bee with you euer, Amen.

IF either I might doe the duetie whereunto your welldeſeruing hath bound me, or might requite with thanks that with all your good wil you haue deſerued: I knowe and confeſſe it (good Madame) longe ſince I ſhould haue come to ſee you: but ſuch is my caſe as I cannot doe either what is moſt meete, or what I moſt deſire: for ſometimes by buſines & ſometime by ſickneſs, & ſometime by opportunity of others, I am holdē here, that I could neuer yet haue opportunitie to ryde fare, or to ſee my natiue Countrie & nigheſt friendes. Once in Somer I would haue gone to M. B. beſides Windſore and the ſeconde night of my trauell, I could not ſleape, but taried a ſeuennight in the ſame place, & then came backe againe, ill at eaſe: thus it pleaſeth God to deale with me, and ſuch a body he hath giuen me, to the ende

(I am ſure) I ſhould not loue this preſent vanitie, but remember him that liueth euer, & deſire to bee diſſolued to ſee his glorie. And this I beſeeche you thinke to be the only cauſe, that I haue not of longe time ſeene you and others, with whom otherwiſe I would wiſhe to dwell: and if it bee the good will of God to proſper my iourneys in time conuenient, I truſt to ſee you oftener hereafter: but his will bee done, who appoynteth our wayes, and numbreth our ſteppes, and doeth all things for the beſt to thoſe that loue him, and to him if I can commit you in my daily prayers, that ſo my ſpirit bee preſent with you, how longe ſoeuer I be abſent in body, yet my duetie I owe you, ſhall not bee altogither vnperformed, and that piece of it which yet is wantinge, that in daily exhortation I might (by the grace of God) ſtirre vp your minde, that in the meane time let me ſupplie with theſe letters: In which moſt hartily I beſeech you (good Madame) goe on forwarde, and faint not in the courſe of godlines, increaſe ſtil in faith, in loue, in hope til with a wiſe hart you haue ſuch a feeling of the glory of God, & of eternall life, that you haue made your account vp with the world, & are at a point with all that is vnder the Sun. While God ſhall prolong your dayes, reioyce in him that hath giuen you life, and vſe all his gifts to his glory: and whe his appointed time ſhal come and bring death into your doores: let this be the preparation of your heart, you deſire to be looſed & to bee with Chriſt, and let this be the anſwere of your tongue, Lord now letteſt thou thy ſeruant departe in peace. Surelie then it ſhall come vnto you, that a happie life ſhal haue a bleſſed end. Your former times haue found their wiſhed iſſue, & the entranse of your graue, ſhalbe

the beginninge of your glorie: Hee hath ſpoken it that can not deceyue vs, That euerie one that beleeueth in him ſhall not taſte of death, but ſhall paſſe from death to life. *This (good Madame) is the crowne & garlande of all our pleaſures: reioyce in feeling it, and be glad in louing it, knit it faſte to all the thoughtes of your hart, & neuer forget it, it ſhal giue you more pleaſure in one day of your life, thē without it you can find in a thouſande yeares: and all the men of the worlde which feele their pleaſure in this life, & know nothing better, then to followe their owne concupiſcence, they ſhall periſh when you ſhall abyde, & they ſhall mourne when you ſhall reioyce, becauſe they haue forgotten the liuinge God whom you haue loued: Manie tentations ſhalbe continuallie againſt you, but God is able to ſet you free from them: caſt your care on him, & you haue wonne the victorie. And to the ende you may knowe him, & how to truſt in him, as the Prophet Dauid did ſo let vs doe, that is: Let vs make his teſtimonies to be our delight, & exerciſe our ſelues in the day & night, for they onely can make vs wiſe, and renue in vs the image of God, that we may be perfect as our heauenlie father is perfect. This hope I thanke God hath bine before me, that I haue not feared in any trouble: and in a good conſcience of this doing, I had rather haue the diſpleaſure of the worlde, then with loſſe of this deſire or anyhurt of it, to winne the fauour of all mortall men. And ſo I am ſure it ſhall be with you that day, in which you ſhall ſo feele Gods glorie, & eternall life, that you will conſecrate your life for euer vnto him, loue him, feare him, longe after him: It ſhal be more ioyfull vnto your thē the daie of your birth, & your heart ſhal be ſet*

as Saint Paule saith, to vse the world as though you vsed it not: not to forsake the world or worldly things, (for they are the gifts of god for the cõforte of our life) but as though wee forsaked it, so let our loue bee taken from it, and be euer with him who is the giuer of all, & hath all immortalitie. There is not a day that passeth ouer our heades, but it afflicteth the body, & maketh it a day shorter liuing then it was: Let there not be a day but shall strengthen our faith, that we may be glad we are one daie neerer the presence of our God, then wee were before. And I beseech god (who only can do what he will) worke his good will with you in all spirituall blessings, that you may abounde: and in the cõdition of this life that you may reioice, till your accounted times bee all fulfilled. Amen.

Youss in the Lord Iesu, *Ed. Deringe.*

A Letter of M. Ed. De. to the Ladie M.

THE Lorde God who hath onely power to worke his will, and hath shewed mercy vnto vs in an eternall couenant, make vs perfect in all our ways to abound in righteousnes, and loue his glorie, that in life and death we may be happie, and haue ioy in his presence, who liueth euer, Amen. Good Madame, the dutie that I haue long owed vnto you, doth much binde me: & the experience of your good inclination, sufficientlie doth emboulden me to write at this time vnto you: and I trust the Lord God who hath giuen you his grace, and called me to this worke, will blesse the labour that it may bee profitable to his glorie & your cõfort. For if his worde haue so great strength in his Saintes when they are yet vn-

vnbeleeuing and ignorant, that it reuealeth euen the secretes of their hartes, that it maketh them fall down to worship him and to acknowledge his mightie power in it: I am sure it can not be but the same worde shall haue strength in you, wholy & altogither to consecrate your selfe vnto the Lord, till all your delight be in him alone. So that I am nowe, more to praye for my selfe then for you, that I may rather speake the trueth then you heare it: for of this I am sure your heart is prepared (as the Prophete sayth) to a good purpose, the Lord make my hande as the penne of a good writer. And nowe (good Madame) this is the summe of all, Feare God & loue him: your goods, your credit, your thoghts, your desires, your body, your life, giue it all vnto him, that he only may please you, nothing but heonly delight you, his worde instruct you, his wil perswade you, that whether you liue or whether you die you may be wholy his: A short lesson & soone learned, harde I confesse of the worlde to practise, but not harde to you whom God hath loued: for what is it can call away your desire, that wholy and altogither it should not be in this? It is onely the worlde that hath taken vp enimitie against vs, and striueth dailie to separate vs from the Lorde. But what is in the worlde why the perswasions of it should please vs? especiallie you who haue had experience of it, whose life God hath filled with worldlie things. You knowe what is the comfort of houses and landes: you haue weighed them well and found them light. You knowe the gladnes of a mother, and haue in your sight Sones & Daughters, the triall of it is in you, & hath entred deepe, eue as they haue bin the fruite of your owne wombe: but in them you haue no such ioye

as in the ſpirit of adoption, by which you knowe your ſelfe to be the childe of God. You knowe the treaſure of a good huſband, with whom you haue had peaceable and louinge dayes: but howe much is it a greater ioye of vnſpeakeable gladnes to feele your ſelfe ioyned to Ieſus Chriſt, & made a chaſte member of his glorious body with whom you ſhalbe ioyned for euer. You haue ſeene a great many yeares of the age of man, and haue meaſured the length of them, ſo that if you might liue the dayes of Abraham, yet you might account your houres and ſee the time at hande, when in the ende of your courſe you ſhall take your reſt: and what were this to immortalitie. To be ſhort and to pretermit manie things wherewith God hath made your life as a bleſſing, you haue ſeene fauour, credite, Landes, Authoritie, Friendes, Seruauntes: the pleaſures of theſe God hath giuen you. You haue ſeene fulneſſe of ſuch delights: but this and all els that you haue ſeene what is it to the grace of God, the fellowſhippe of Saintes, the forgiuenes of your ſinnes, the loue of his countenance, the aſſurance of your life, the brightnes of his glorie, & your eternall bleſſinges. Sith then in the world is no ſure refuge, the more I haue ſeene the fruit of your faith, the more aſſuredlie I knowe the conſtancie of your minde readie to leaue the worlde to approch nearer vnto God, and to account all theſe thinges to be but dunge, to the ende you may winne Ieſus Chriſt, in whom you ſhalbe ſo much more bleſſed, as light is more bright then darkneſſe, health is more excellent then ſickneſſe, and life more precious then cruell death. This (good Madame) you haue long knowen, and with prayſe profeſſed it among men: And nowe eſpeciallie reape the fruite of it

in these dayes of Gods visitation, in which in a weake body you haue had a sharpe sickenesse, to teach you that your life is in the handes of God, & the nature of your body that it is but dust, so that you should not loue it but in the Lorde, nor be pleased with it but as it pleaseth him, readie to laye it downe when he shall call you. This is that great and high commandement: To loue God aboue all, *and this is the greatest obedience required of man, to be readie to dye at the will of God: Vnto which commaundement when I doe beseech you willinglie to yeelde, I feele in my selfe howe the nature of man striueth against it: all those delightes of which I spake before (the pleasures of this present life) they arise against it: although we had no other comfort, yet life it self is sweete vnto vs, & we are loth to make our beds in the darke, our eyes they would yet see the sunne, our eares would heare the sounde of worldly elements, though our flesh be grasse, yet grasse hath a flower, & our fraile bodyes haue vanishinge fantasies agreeable vnto them as earth vnto earth, and from which most hardlie you shall pull it away, the Patriarkes & Prophetes were sometime afraide, Paule and Peter were not alwayes bolde, they loued euer that life which they sawe in hope, but they did feele the death whiche did fight in their members: And howe should I then saye vnto you a weake woman, feare not death, or if I say it howe can you performe it beeing so weake a vessell of flesh and bloud: yet good Madame, giue me leaue to intreate you & I hope you shall haue a heart to graunt it: I most humblie beseeche you, feare not death. The Apostles were men as we are, yet Paule obteyned at last to be dissolued & be with Christ: if we be weaker*

then he, the graces of God shalbe more exalted in vs, and we also shall say at the last, Let thy seruaunt O Lord departe in peace: *It is the Lorde that hath promised this blessing vnto vs, let vs heare it with faith, and it will make death vile in our eyes: it is enough if we knowe God will giue this victorie to his people, let vs be bolde, though we feare a litle while, yet feare shall be cast out, and we shall say with a free spirit, O death where is thy stinge, &c. trie your selfe therefore euery day, and if your harte be bolde, reioyce good Madame, & reioyde for euer: the last and greatest enimie (which is death) is troden vnder your feete, and what els can hurt you: all other things of the world they are but seruauntes of death, and serue to make his power more fearfull vnto vs, friendes or kinsefolke, golde, siluer. pretious stones or al other pleasures, all labour vnto one ende, to make vs more loth to die: vanquish death and you haue vaquished all, height & depth, life and death, all is yours, & you are Christes. And see I beseeche you what glorie you haue gotten, you are but a weake and sicke woman whom God hath shut vp into your chamber, and tyed to your bedde: and yet the great tyrant of the world, that holdeth in bondage Kings & Princes, and woundeth them all with feare & terror, he is confounded before you, & the Lord of life he hath crushed him in pieces vnder you. A blessed day that brought you first into this battell, a blessed sickenesse that made you endure the fight, & most blessed ende in which you get the victorie: for who hath giuen you this strength, or who raigneth in you in such a day, but he who hath saued and doue it, O death I wilbe thy death: and if he be in you who hath abolished death, and in whose*

sight

ſight death ſhall neuer haue any rule, what treaſure, what depth of ioy and gladnes ſhall he bring with him: while you liue you ſhal liue in him, & no man ſhall take your ioy from you: and whē you die you ſhall die in him, and death ſhalbe no death, but you ſhall paſſe to eternall life: and all that is fearfull ſhalbe farre from you: the burthen of ſinne, the malice of the deuill, the terrour of hell: the dreadfull words, goe ye curſed into eternall fire: All this is aboliſhed & troden down in the croſſe of Ieſus Chriſt, who reigneth in you, & giueth you his ſpirit, that you feare not death: and all things that fill with ioy not the earth onely, but the heauens alſo (you haue deſtroyed death) you ſhall feele thē all within you: the fellowſhip of Saints & Angels, the forgiuenes of ſinns, the reſurrection of the body, the life euerlaſting, and the God of glorie: your eyes lightened with a pure faith ſhall ſee theſe things in ſo perfect beautie, that you ſhall caſt out death & the feare of it: yea you ſhould thinke your time wearines if your dayes ſhould be prolonged, and you ſhould bee yet many yeares a ſoiorner in this bodie, in which you are a ſtraunger from the preſence of the Lorde: And the nearer your time approcheth, the gladder you ſhalbe of the ende of your iourney, when your harte ſhall feele it: And when the earthlie houſe of this tabernacle ſhalbe deſtroyed, you haue a building giuen of God, a houſe not made with hands, but eternall in the heauens. In this faith you ſhall not onely not feare death, but you ſhall ſigh and moane (as Paule ſaith) till you ſee your glorie, and the lot of the ſaints that is in light, where there is no more ſorrow nor care, nor feare, nor death, but the God of all mercie, and father of our lord Ieſus Chriſt ſhalbe before vs for euer.

Thus

Thus Madame (as my duetie is) I haue written vnto you, and God will blesse it as his promise is, that it shall be for the best, & in the wisdome of his word we shalbe strengthned in his grace, that death & sickenesse shalbe forgotten, & all the desirs of our heart shalbe with him. And the Lord God for his Sonnes sake, so haue mercie vpon vs, that all euill taken from vs, we may reioyce in him, and see his blessed age that is in immortality, & is sealed in our heartes with his blessed spirit: To whom be glorie for euermore, Amen. *From Saint Ellens, the tenth of Ianuarie,* Anno Domini, 1576.

Yours bounden in the Lord Iesu, the onely forgiuenes of all our sinnes, *Ed. Deringe.*

A Letter written by M. Edward Deringe, to his Lord & Maister the Duke of Northfolke.

Gratia et pax a Deo patre, et domino nostro Iesu Christo.

THE longe good will that I haue borne vnto you, as to one that earnestlie professed the Gospell, and the great duetie I owe vnto you as to my Lord & Master, make, that nowe I should write vnto you, not knowing whether opportunitie shalbe such that hereafter I may doe you any seruice. God the author of all life he hath shutte both you and me vp in his handes: that there is great likelihood, our liues in this worlde they are but short. The Prince that executeth the iudgement of the Lord, she hath found you out in your great sinnes: and sickenes that raigneth ouer all flesshe, it hath taken now longe holde vpon me. So that as I saide, we are both in the handes of the Lord, we are summoned parentorilie, death hath giuen an assaulte, and the weake holdes of our life they are violentlie shaken. Nowe therefore

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my good Lord, let it vs take counsell together, and as a wise Maister, learne of a faithfull seruaunt what is best to be done: the worst that our sinnes can doe vnto vs, is to lay vpon vs the iust reward of death, my disease which thus afflicteth me for many thousand sinns, it can but take away my life which I haue so abused. And all your deepe dissimulation and hypocrisie, your great ambitions, your faithlesse religion, which haue so bewitched you, what can they doe more then this? The remedie nowe is to make of necessitie a vertue, that is, to beare it wisely, which you must needes abide. I haue (I thanke God) founde that grace, that I can loue this saying, Cupio dissolui & esse cum Christo, the Lord also open your hearte and guide your vnderstandinge, that with all saintes you may doe likewise, and praye, Veni Domine Iesu. And now for asmuch as this is the last duetie, that I am like to doe vnto you, as God shall giue grace I will so aduice you as I may testifie myne owne faith, and make you strong against the daye of triall: trusting that our God shall so remember vs both in mercie, that after a little while we shall see better dayes, and raigne with him that abideth King for euer. There is now but one thing necessarie for you to learne in this life, that is, how you may willinglie desire to die: a hard lesson for a natural mā, for death is our last enimie & his assault most violent to the triall of our faith: but Christ who hath ouercome death and hell, hee hath broken the strength of this battell, and set vp the songes of triumph vnto all that beleeue, that we may haue the fulnesse of ioy and say with gladnes, ô death where is thy sting. Nowe that this ioye may be yours, and this gladnes your inheritāce, prepare your selfe, not in your

owne

own wisdō, for that hath alredie deceiued you, but in the wisdome of god, that your hope may be sure. If you will now haue the hart that shal cōdemne the force of death cōsider wherfore you are called to die: It is laid to your charg, that you haue delt traytrously with your Prince, with your cōtry, & with the religiō of God: and vpon these crimes you are cōdemned to die. If you be guiltles, ō my Lord blessed are you, & blessed is your portion: he hath spokē it that neuer will change: If whē you do well you suffer wrōgfully, take it patiētly, for this is acceptable to god: but if you be guilty you haue not your hope in death (for that you haue deserued) but your hope is this, that you die so as it becōmeth you: which if god shal grāt vnto you, then blessed is the howre that God shall bring vpon you, you shal make that change, which god for his Christes sake, lay speedily vpon all his children, & you shal die once, that you may liue euer. Now that you may know how you ought to die: learne this of the lord which he hath so plainly taught you. The first part of your true repētāce, must be an hūble cōfessiō: what soeuer your own conscience can vtter more the is reuealed. O my Lorde speake opēly the trueth, sathan is enimie vnto vs & his slightes are many: if you will treade the malicious serpent vnder your feete, & triumph with Christ who hath spoiled hell, tell the trueth my Lord, conceale nothing, so shall you shunne the diuel. If my words seeme but light to persuade you, heare the wisest counsellour that euer raigned in Israel: He that hideth his sinne (saieth Salomon) shall neuer prosper, but he that cōfesseth & forsaketh them, shal finde mercie. Whē Acan had transgressed in Israel & deserued death, when he was brought into iudgemēt, Iosua said vnto him, My Son I beseech thee, giue glory to the lord God of Israel, make cōfession

vnto

vnto him, & shew me now what thou hast done. Let my Lord, this is to giue glorie vnto God: to cõfesse your sin, & tell what you haue done. The good king Dauid whẽ he had deserued death, & feared greatly the sentence of the Prophet, he cõfessed gladly & made it knowen vnto the world what his sin was, & wherin he had offended. Whẽ God gaue his lawes vnto Israel, & in the bloud of goates & calues sheweth thẽ the redemptiõ that was in Christ Iesus: He so ordeined, that before their forgiuenes was preached, the high priest should proclaime openlie what were the sins of the people, & so lay their sins vpon the beastes. So standeth it nowe with vs, if we will finde forgiuenes of our sins, let vs cast off the cloaks of shame, & cõfesse before heauẽ & earth, what we haue sinned & what we haue done. What greater persuasions can you yet require, or how can you thinke to please God if you wil hide your sins? That was the practise of old Adam, but you are borne anew: that was the sin of Cain, but you my good Lord are of a better kinred. Speak the truth & shrinke not, God will once reueale the secrets of harts, & thẽ you shal reioice that ther is nothing of yours hidde vpõ that sin, that you should turn away for one houre & receiue hereafter euerlasting cõfusiõ: better a thousad times to receiue the reproch of flesh, & after receiue your glory of the Lord. Whẽ John Baptist preached first the Gospell, he bpatized no more thẽ such as confessed their sins. The lost Son whẽ he ran away, he found no hope of pardõ, til he called heauẽ & earth to witnesse his great iniquitie. Paul who preached the gospell to vs Gentils, how oftẽ doth he confesse that he was a persecutor. The happy thief that was hãged entred not into paradise, til he first in the hearing of all Israell said, We are rightly punished, & receiue things worthy of that we haue done.

What

What ſhould I ſay more, I truſt you feare God, and I haue ſeene in you many ſignes of grace: I doubt not but you will make it knowen what ſoeuer is in your hart. It is the word of God that I haue ſpoken, & it is the onely trueth vpō which you may build your faith. This thing toucheth ſo neare the glory of God & the ſafetie of his goſpell, that you muſt now needs forſake your friends & kinſmē, yea forget the loue of your ſelfe: and if you haue bin partaker of any counſell, diſcloſe the cōſpiracies of the wicked: you haue ſtood in iudgement not before me, for they are but miniſters, but before the Lord, who ſitteth in the middſt of iudgement. Surely if you ſeeke to hide your ſins, you ſeeke to hide them frō him that knoweth the ſecrets of the hart & raynes, and to diſſemble with him that will not be mocked: and therefore with all humblenes of dutie, I beſeech you, & in the name of God I craue this at your hands, vnburthē your own cōſcience, make your hart glad, caſt of the burthē of your ſecret ſinns, purge the eyes of your minde, that you may ſee Chriſt, let true repētance breake forth in holy confeſſion. ſhame the Lords enimies, & make the church of God reioyce, and loe in the name of Chriſt I tell it you: Bleſſed is the day in which it was ſaid of you, a man-child is borne, and bleſſed ſhalbe the houre in which it ſhalbe ſaid of you, you are dead in the Lord: the cloſing vp of your eyes ſhalbe the beginning of your ſight: and death your entrance into life. And now my Lord, I beſeech you pray for me, & humbly vpō my knees I aſke you hartie forgiuenes wherein I haue not done as it became me touching you. You knowe howe in my time I haue perſuaded you frō your wicked ſeruants, frō your popiſh frīds, & frō your adulterous woman. But (alas)

my

my Lord, your high calling hath bridled my words, I could not ſpeak as I ſhold, my words wer to ſoft to heale ſo old a diſeaſe: why ſhould I haue taried in your lordſhips houſe, except theſe things had bin amẽded? this bearing with your euill, was the greateſt euill I could haue done you. And I beſeech you forgiue me, & God for his mercies ſake ſhall make me ſtrong, that hereafter I ſhall not feare to reproue the ſinner, & God ſhall forgiue you your dulnes of ſpirit, that could not be moued with a little coũſel. Now my Lord, be ſtrong in the Lord, & feare not, if you muſt dye, remẽber that Chriſt hath ouercome him that hath the power of death, & hath ſet vs free frõ the power of the graue. Though you doe for a very little time turne again vnto duſt, yet again you ſhal heare the voyce of the trumpet: corruptiõ ſhall die, becauſe he was no better thẽ his fathers: & you whẽ you go, you ſhall go to your fathers, the long race of Nobilitie of which God hath raiſed you, euery one in his time is gone before you, & ſo many as haue died in the faith, they ſhalbe againe of your fellowſhip & kindred, and you ſhall prayſe God with thẽ, & not feare the ſecõd death. The lord opẽ your eyes that you may ſee your hope, & you ſhall loue that cõpany aboue Kings & Princes. You ſhall ſee Abrahã, of whõ you haue heard ſo much, Iſaac, Iacob, Iob, Samuell & Daniell, whoſe names you loued, you ſhall ſee Paule & Peter, whoſe ſociety you wiſh for, all the Patriarkes, Prophets and Apoſtles that are gone before you. Be bold therfore, & be bold to dye: with Elias you ſhall ſee Chriſt clothed with your fleſh, who hath immortalitie in his hande, & ſhal make you raigne for euer: your time ſhall not be tedious, and your glory ſhall haue no change: & he that made the heauens ſo high aboue the

earth,

earth, the Sun the moone the ſtarres, ſo ful of excellēt beauty
he ſhal be your portiō in his endles glory: wold God you cold
ſee him now with opē countenance, that you might knowe hi
louing kindnes, how much it is better thē life: I wold you cold
with al his ſaints perceiue what wer the height, the bredth, th
lenght & the depth of his vnſearchable riches. O hapy day
that ſhal neuer end, ô bleſed inheritāce that ſhal neuer waſ
O holy citty new Ieruſalē, the perfectiō of beauty, where the
inhabitāts are princes, O pretious buildng that is not made
with hands, & ioyfull tabernacles which God himſelfe hath
pitched: my voice faileth & my tonge cleaueth to my mouth
whē I wold declare the euerlaſting gladneſſe, whē God ſhal
wipe away al teares frō our eies, & ther ſhal be no more death
neither ſorow, nor crying, nor yet any paine for the firſt things
paſt. Who remēbreth this & ſaith not, all fleſh is graſſe, and
the glory of man is as the flower of the fielde. We haue no-
thing here but feare of our enimie, griefe in powertie, paine
in labour, care in riches, vnſtedfaſtnes in frindſhip, enmy in
authoritie, emulation in honor, change in nobilitie, feare in
a kingdome: & as the greateſt of al princes hath wiſely pro-
nounced, vexatiō of ſpirit in al things that is vnder the Sun,
ſo true it is vanity of vanities & alas but vanity. You need
no example O my Lord & Maiſter, behold your ſelfe & ſee
what you were: reioice in the lord & loue better things, ceaſe
to rate of this corruptiō, & deſire Mānā: drink not of theſe
puddels, but goe to the pure water of life, which is cleare as
chriſtal, & proceedeth out of the throne of god & of the lāb:
you are but one ſtep frō this glorious bleſſing, & that is to die
willingly & well: ſpeak forth the ſecrets of your hart, & giue
God glorie. The Lord bleſſe & kepe you, the Lord make his
face to ſhine vpon you and be merciful vnto you, the Lord
lift vp his countenance vpon you and ſende you peace.

FINIS.